# Did You Mean It?

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A million thoughts raced through Stan's head as he tried to sleep, a week after the fight with It. Flashes of “Georgie” running through the tunnels with Stan's best friends chasing after him, ignoring his quiet pleas. How could they not realise that this wasn’t fake. This wasn't some ultimate game of hide and seek, where the winner gets to choose the movie they watch that night and the losers have to suck it up. In this game, the losers never got a second chance. And there was nothing Stan could do to stop them from dying if anything happened. Memories of the lady in the painting, her teeth sinking into his face as he tried to breathe but was slowly suffocated, dying alone in the sewers. His friends assured him they would never leave him, that they loved him, and they would never let anything happen to him but Stan couldn't help but think that they already had.

The next day, his doubts were stronger than ever as he made his way over to Richie's house. The two of them hanging out had been a regular occurrence recently, and Stan found he felt safer in Ritchie's room than he did anywhere else. Richie seemed to be the only person Stan felt comfortable enough with to share his fears and doubts with, and Richie was always there with soft reassurances and cuddles when he needed them. When he finally reached his house, Richie welcomed him in with open arms and a box of pizza.

Fast forward two hours, the pizzas gone and the game they had been playing for a week straight was finally beat. The two boys had decided to stay where they were, laying in bed side by side, as they talked about anything that came to mind. Stan debated between voicing his doubts and letting them stay hidden in the back of his brain, but looking at Richie, he found himself wanting to tell him everything, so he did.

He told him about all the flashbacks, dreams, doubts, and fears he had been experiencing since the week before. He expressed his worry that he was going insane. Stan talked for almost an hour, spilling his heart out to the boy he trusted so much, ending it with a single question that had resonated louder in his mind the more time he spent with Richie.

“Did you mean it when you said you would never let anything happen to me?”

The look on Richie's face was enough to tell him what the answer was. And the more time Richie spent spilling *his* heart out was enough to convince him it was true.